

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:30 p.m. Regular Meeting December 19, 2013 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

David Lahousse, Chairman
Bernadette Rochefort, Vice Chairwoman
Sally Anthony
Charles Baldelli
Roger Bouchard
Theresa Corbeille
Janet Lemieux

Robert Kulik, Executive Director – Absent
Christine O'Connor – Acting Interim Executive Director
Duncan C. Speel, Deputy Director
Robert Moreau – Security Director

2. Good and Welfare for the Audience – None
3. Good and Welfare for the Commissioners

Commissioner Baldelli stated that he does not believe that the people in the Board room understand the meaning of Executive Session and asked Attorney Murphy to explain to the Board what Executive Session means regarding confidentiality of information. The Commissioner was upset over the article in *The Call* regarding the Executive Director. Commissioner Lemieux asked Commissioner Baldelli if he was absolutely positive that it was someone in the Executive Session that divulged the information and Commissioner Baldelli replied “absolutely” and said he knew it for a fact. Attorney Murphy explained that anything in Executive Session is not to leave the room and that the minutes are sealed. The attorney also said that the reporter had a copy of the complaint, but the Board members did not. Attorney Murphy said he was lead to believe that it came from an employee. Commissioner Baldelli said it came from one of the commissioners. The Chairman explained that very few people had the complaint letter. The Vice Chairwoman told Commissioner Baldelli that he could not accuse the Board. He replied that he was. Commissioner Lemieux noted her resentment of Commissioner Baldelli’s remarks. Other Commissioners concurred.

4. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept the minutes for the regular meeting of November 21, 2013 and the minutes of the Executive Session of November 21, 2013. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux – Abstain

5. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept the bills paid for the month of October 2013. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

6. Communications and Interest of the Authority – A and B. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Chairman Lahousse.

The Chairman asked Deputy Speel to discuss the “Why RAD” information. The Deputy explained that RAD is a new HUD tool to renovate older properties. The projects gets converted into a Section 8 project based voucher development, or project based rental assistance. The City would get additional taxes based on the conversion. There are also low-income housing tax credits associated with the program. The WHA would have to pay off a proportionate amount of debt in order to go forward. Deputy Speel provided more details about the program and suggested that time is of the essence in order for us to get a holding place,

specifically, the end of the year 2013. Chairman Lahousse stopped the Deputy and suggested that due to the complexity of the issue, perhaps there could be a workshop for the commissioners. Joe Garlick from NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley was in attendance and offered that submitting the application did not commit the WHA to anything, just got the WHA in line. Mr. Garlick responded to the Chair that it does not cost the WHA anything to submit the application. Mr. Garlick noted that he feels that RAD may be the future of public housing. Commissioner Bouchard agreed to submitting the application to hold a spot for the WHA, but wants a workshop if it goes any further. Commissioner Bouchard wanted to be assured that the only reason we would be interested in RAD would not be to simply preserve the Housing Authority. He does not think it would be a bad option to consider turning some property over to a private concern. He said as Commissioners they should also be looking at what is best for the City. The Chair asked for Attorney Murphy to review the application before it is signed. Vice Chairwoman Rochefort commented that she and Commissioner Corbeille attended a conference in September which highlighted the new RAD program.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

7. Report of the Secretary

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept and place on file, the report of the Secretary, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

Acting Director Christine O'Connor asked Bob Moreau to report on his 10 days as Co-Acting Interim Executive Director (before he was asked to resign because of a conflict with his City Council seat.) Mr. Moreau noted the reintroduction of weekly management meetings which were well received. Mr. Moreau then addressed a punch list walk-through of the renovated units at Veteran's Memorial. He reported on the exterior doors of 54 units. The doors used are manufactured to open out, but were installed to open in. As a result, the doors do not seal properly and water leaks in to the apartments. Mr. Moreau was told that the warrantee on the doors was voided because they were not installed properly. Duncan has been

working with JJ Cardosi to get the doors fixed; there is a swipe mechanism (gasket) being installed on the bottoms of the doors. Mr. Moreau asked whose expense this repair would be. Commissioner Lemieux asked if the doors could be installed correctly. Deputy Director said they doors used are intended for commercial use and are designed to open outward; however, residential doors must open inward, per code. Deputy Speel concurred that there is a 1/16 to 1/8 inch gap in several doors; additionally the door insulation is not installed properly. Again Commissioner Lemieux asked if the doors could just be installed properly. Deputy Speel responded that the doors are installed properly. Commissioner Baldelli asked why there was no Clerk of the Works for a project of this magnitude. Mr. Moreau reported that the architect said that there are going to be storm doors installed that will assist in alleviating the problem. The architect indicated that the mesh on the half-screen will be so tight that rain will not go through it. The Chairman asked if the storm doors were part of the original plan; the Deputy responded yes. The Chair asked who selected the doors and decided to install them incorrectly. The Deputy said the architect selected the doors, but they are not installed incorrectly. Acting Director O'Connor asked who is paying for the fix. The Deputy said he has not offered to pay. Vice Chairwoman Rochefort asked why the doors cannot be taken off and installed properly. The Deputy said the doors are installed properly. Commissioner Baldelli asked the Deputy if he is satisfied with the progress at Veteran's. The Deputy said yes. Commissioner Baldelli asked if the Deputy is pleased with the architect Ted Rowse despite all of these issues, and does he have confidence in Mr. Rowse. The Deputy said yes. Acting Director O'Connor presented her report providing discussing a new report designed for the Board Packages that condenses the information for bills paid for the month, an update on staffing issues, and the delay in presenting the 2014 Operating Budget in the absence of the Executive Director. Commissioner Lemieux asked if there would be an issue about sending the budget to HUD off schedule. The Finance Director had indicated that it would not be an issue. Acting Director O'Connor also addressed the high cost of color toner cartridges used at Kennedy Manor, \$4,600 year to date and suggested purchasing birthday cards rather than color printing them, and taking a harder look at some expenses. In updating the Board on union negotiations, the Acting Director spoke of an info session earlier in the week with Blue Cross representatives and members of both negotiating committees to discuss the implementation of an HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) to help curtail the proposed increase in premiums while maintaining a good benefit for employees.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony

Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

7A. Report of the Deputy Director

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the report of the Deputy, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Deputy submitted his report as written, highlighting the punch list at Veteran's Memorial last week setting a substantial completion date of mid-January for occupancy for the first building. The items in need of attention were minor, including refrigerator doors opening toward the stoves, a tear in the screen, some cabinet adjustments, nothing that could not be done in a week. The second building would be close to follow, the third and fourth building the beginning of February and the last building the middle of February. There was an RFP done for developers for the Choice NeighborWorks. Two expressed an interest. There was some further energy saving work provided at no cost by RISE.

Commissioner Bouchard asked a question of the Acting Director regarding mention of Beekman Securities in her report. Beekman wants to be consultants to the WHA for the filing of a RAD application for Morin Heights. Commissioner Bouchard asked, for free? Deputy Speel answered no, for \$15,000. The Commissioner asked for a work session to educate the Board on RAD and is there someone from HUD that could attend to present a broader viewpoint, or are there any trainings (local or on-line available.) The Deputy said there is one gentleman at HUD who is knowledgeable. Commissioner Lemieux asked if he could present to PHAs in RI. She does not want a consultant to explain RAD to us.

The Chairman asked the Deputy when we would be moving residents back into Veteran's. Deputy said mid-January. The Chair also asked about change orders and if there were more changes anticipated. The Deputy said there was one more substantial change order for time and materials, in excess of \$80,000, and he does not anticipate any more.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli

Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

7B. Reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

8. Report of Committees – None

9. Unfinished Business – Approval of award of contract for IT Services.

Commissioner Bouchard made a motion to have the IT Service contract award tabled until a Commissioner’s workshop can be held. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anthony. A workshop session was proposed for January 6, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

10. New Business

- A. Approval of Resolution # 1122: Approval of Section 8 Payment Standards to reflect FY 2014 Fair Market Rents. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- B. Approval of Resolution #1123: Approval of utility allowance updates for Section 8 for a) apartment/walk-up/multi-family, and b) semi-detached/duplex/detached. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- C. Approval of Resolution # 1124: Authorizing the Write-Off of Uncollectible LIPH Accounts. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort

Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- D. Approval of Resolution # 1125: Authorizing the Write-Off of Uncollectible Section 8 Accounts. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- E. Approval to file a RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) application for 296 units at Veteran’s Memorial Family Development. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

Commissioner Bouchard confirmed that this application does not obligate the WHA. Chairman Lahousse makes the approval subject to attorney review and approval.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- F. Approval to file a RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) application for 282 units at Morin Heights Family Development. A motion was made by Commissioner Bouchard and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

The Deputy said he could do an RFP for proposals, have a workshop, and try to get someone from HUD to explain the program.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- G. Request to donate old metal folding chairs. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard.

The Chairman asked where the chairs were going. To the City.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

- H. Approval of Resolution # 1126: Procurements to be made in accordance with WHA small purchase procedures. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard.

The Chairman asked for a clarification. Attorney Murphy stated that this is the same threshold as the state of RI, \$5,000/\$10,000, and it gives the Board approval on all procurements that exceed those amounts. There was some discussion regarding HUD vs. state regulations; the Attorney explained that

where there is a conflict, Federal law rules. The Acting Director asked the Procurement Officer to speak to this issue. Susan Castrataro explained how the \$5000/\$10,000 limits would severely limit day to day necessary spending. She presented a breakdown including 38 vendors that would require Board approval, for essentials such as snow melt. These limits would also require RFPs which would increase advertising costs and delay ordering. The Chairman explained that he is not trying to bog down the Authority and does not have a problem moving the limits higher. The Procurement Officer added that there is currently no procedure in place for change orders, which there should be. There was some further discussion about the proposed limits. Commissioners Lemieux and Bouchard asked for a spreadsheet and resolution that will cover the concerns of the Board and not bog down the Authority.

A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Lemieux

11. Adjournment

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard at 6:10 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Christine O'Connor
Acting Interim Executive Director